



South Carolina Department of
**CHILDREN'S
 ADVOCACY**
Advocacy. Accountability. Service.

MONTHLY UPDATE

Department of Children's Advocacy Monthly Update
Connecting with and updating our community

Advocating for Permanency

by

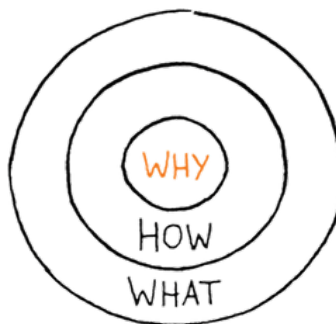
Amanda F. Whittle, J.D., CWLS

State Child Advocate and Director of the S.C. Dept. of Children's Advocacy

The data and research concerning the impact of foster care on children does not support a finding that no children should ever enter foster care; however, data and research do support an acknowledgement that it is in the best interests of children to ensure foster care placement is temporary. Some children must enter foster care when they are in imminent and substantial danger without viable options for alternative placement or safety measures. Our communities are indebted to the foster parents, kinship caregivers, congregate care providers, and child-placing agencies who meet the needs of vulnerable abused and neglected children. Child welfare professionals should commit to strengthening the foster care system and to advocating with urgency and empathy for permanency for children who enter the custody of the Department of Social Services (DSS).

In 1959, in cooperation with the Child Welfare League of America, Henry Maas and Richard Englar studied the conditions of children in foster care across the nation. (*Endnote 1*)

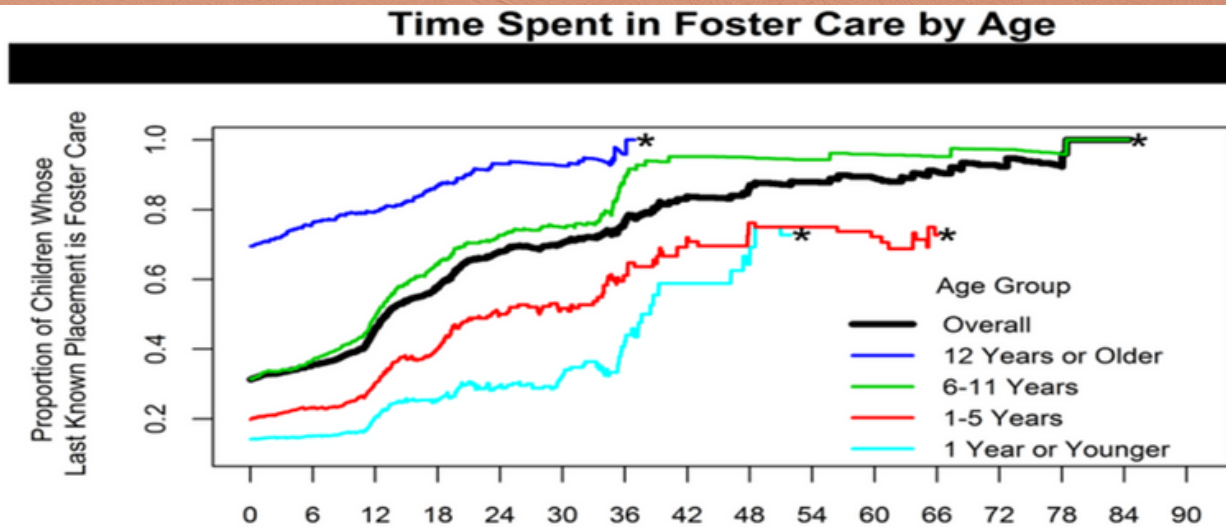
The purpose of this study was to answer the basic questions asked by the Child Welfare League of America regarding the quarter of a million children who were in foster care in the United States at that time:



- Who are they?
- Why have they been removed from their homes?
- Why can't they go home or be adopted? (*Endnote 2*)

In 2013, a research brief of the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) further examined factors affecting permanency and well-being for children in foster care. Brief No. 19, entitled "Risk of Long-Term Foster Care Placement Among Children Involved in the Child Welfare System," asked the following questions: (1) How does time spent in foster care affect a child's chances of continuing to live in foster care? (2) Is a child's age at the time of a maltreatment investigation associated with the likelihood of remaining in foster care? (*Endnote 3*)

Advocating for Permanency (continued)



For cite, see *Endnote 4*

Key findings from the 2013 NSCAW study revealed that length of time in foster care is a key factor to permanency and well-being:

- Longer periods of time in foster care are associated with greater risk for remaining in foster care instead of achieving permanency.
- Children 12 years or older placed in foster care after a maltreatment investigation are at particularly high risk for living in long-term foster care.
- Permanency planning efforts are needed to target children at risk for long-term foster care placements. These efforts are particularly critical for children who are placed in foster care as teenagers.

We have continued to learn about the effects the child welfare system, specifically foster care, has on children. “Children who have been in the U.S. foster care system are at a significantly higher risk of mental and physical health problems — ranging from learning disabilities, developmental delays and depression to behavioral issues, asthma and obesity — than children who haven’t been in foster care.

Using logistic regression models, researchers found that children who had been in foster care were:

- Seven times as likely to experience depression
- Six times as likely to exhibit behavioral problems
- Five times as likely to feel anxiety
- Three times as likely to have attention deficit disorder, hearing impairments and vision issues
- Twice as likely to suffer from learning disabilities, developmental delays, asthma, obesity and speech problems”

As child welfare authorities strive to provide permanency for the children in their care, they continue to face the challenge of how to measure progress. Based on the empirical results from their study, Maas and Engler (1959) inferred that “staying in care beyond a year and a half greatly increases a child’s chances of growing up in care.”

(For NSCAW Study cites, see *Endnote 5*)

Advocating for Permanency (continued)

The National Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in Child Welfare presented compelling data regarding the impacts of a child's age and the length of time spent in foster care at the National Association of Counsel for Children conference in 2016. This data aligns with the questions and observations of Maas and Engel in 1959 and the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being's 2013 research brief: (*For cite, see Endnote 6*)

Age of the child:

What is the likelihood of reunification for an 8 year old foster care child? If a child enters foster care at the age of 8, what is the likelihood of reunification?

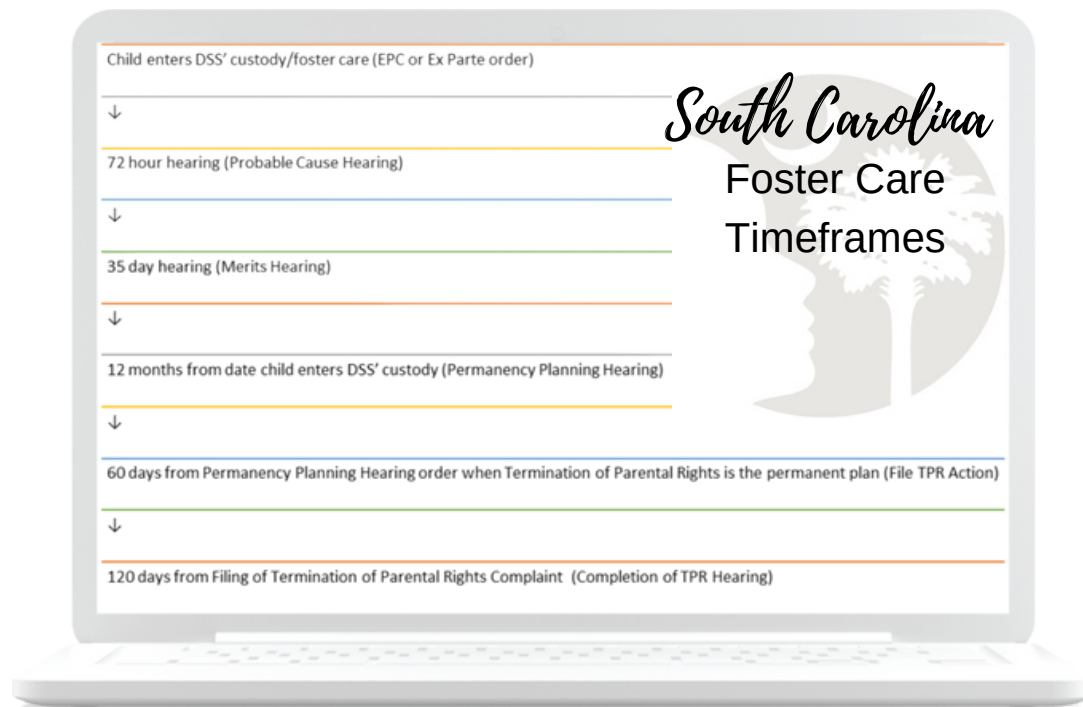
Answer: 75%

Length of time in foster care:

What is the likelihood of reunification after a child has spent two years in foster care? On average, if a child stays in foster care two or more years, what is the likelihood of reunification?

Answer: 6%

Length of time in foster care, even moreso than age, affects how long a child will continue to remain in foster care without permanency, and time in foster care increases trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences for a child. Thus, South Carolina laws which require timely hearings, from probable cause to merits and from permanency planning to reunification or adoption are not arbitrary but are grounded in the data and research regarding the point(s) in time when a child's permanency trajectory changes significantly. Advocating for permanency is essential to improving outcomes for children in foster care.



Endnotes

1. MAAS, HENRY S. "Children in Long-Term Foster Care." *Child Welfare*, vol. 48, no. 6, 1969, pp. 321-47. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45393118>.
2. <https://academic.oup.com/sw/article-abstract/5/4/113/1869468?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
3. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency/administrators/eliminating-barriers/>
4. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/nscaw_itfc_research_brief_19_revised_for_acf_9_12_13_edit_clean.pdf
5. <https://chlss.org/blog/study-shows-foster-care-is-bad-for-your-health/> & <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/recent>
6. National Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in Child Welfare (QIC-ChildRep) 2009-2016 Activities Report presented at the 2016 National Association of Counsel for Children conference; attended by Amanda Whittle 8/12-8/14/2016

Department of Children's Advocacy Celebrates 3-Year Anniversary

On July 1, 2022, the Department of Children's Advocacy celebrated its third year as a state agency. Shout out to the Department of Children's Advocacy's staff and volunteers for their spirit, persistence, and energy to improve outcomes for children and families in South Carolina!

"Thank you for sharing this wonderful resource highlighting the amazing work that you and your TEAMS are doing. One TEAM."

- Berry B. Kelly, MBA, Director
Bureau of Community Nutrition Services
S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control

"It means so much to us knowing you are listening to our concerns and wanting to help solve problems we encounter as we all help to serve these children in SC."

- Ann Nichols, Chairman
Greenville County FCRB 13-F



Appreciation from the Department of Children's Advocacy

Our work would not be possible without the support of the General Assembly and the Governor's Office. As we celebrate our 3rd anniversary, we are thankful for the statutory authority and funding to advocate for children. Governor Henry McMaster signed the FY23 budget which was passed by the 124th South Carolina General Assembly. The FY23 budget includes the budget requests presented by Director Whittle on behalf of the Department of Children's Advocacy as well as raises and bonuses for state employees.



Congratulations and Welcome!



Congratulations to Kathleen Bounds who was recently presented with the Silver Crescent Award by Governor Henry McMaster.

Kathleen is a member of the Foster Care Review Board's 9E board and was recognized for her dedication to the citizens of South Carolina.

The Order of the Silver Crescent was created by Governor David Beasley in 1997 and subsequently modified by Governor Jim Hodges. It is the State of South Carolina's service award. It was specifically established as the State of South Carolina's most prestigious service award recognizing a remarkable achievement or action, an individual's dedicated community service or volunteerism. Congratulations to Kathleen Bounds!



Welcome to Barry Knighton - Quality Assurance Manager for the Department of Children's Advocacy's Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program.

Barry is a native of the Lowcountry. He is a graduate of the University of South Carolina where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in History with an emphasis in Secondary Education in addition to a Master's Degree in Social Work concentrating in Health and Mental Health. He is currently pursuing Doctor of Education in Education, Policy, Organization, and Leadership with a concentration in Human Resource Development through the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Barry was previously employed with Program Evaluation and Contract Monitoring, Staff Development and Training as a Child Welfare Curriculum Coordinator, and as a Family Preservation Case Manager with DSS and as a Health Care Access Coordinator with S.C. Primary Health Association. Among other interests, Barry is passionate about child advocacy, and we welcome him to the DCA Team!

Guardian ad Litem Program Welcomes New Team Members



Christopher "Topher" Emmolo ~ Charleston County

Topher joined DCA on June 2 as a Program Coordinator I for the Charleston County Guardian ad Litem Program. Prior to joining the Guardian Ad Litem program, Topher was in leadership roles with an all-volunteer organization whose mission is to empower abused children, and Topher says that experience gave him first-hand opportunity to see how important it is for abused children to have a voice speaking on their behalf with only their best interests in mind.



Beth King ~ Lexington County

Beth is the new Program Coordinator I/Case Manager with Lexington County Guardian ad Litem Program. She previously worked as an Adoption Specialist with DSS, with youth in a residential facility, and as a Registered Behavior Technician for individuals living with Autism. Beth received her Bachelor's Degree at Coker College and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Social Work with the University of South Carolina. She grew up in South Jersey and moved to South Carolina to attend college.



Gregory Stephens ~ Florence County

Gregory joined DCA in mid-June as the Program Coordinator I for Florence County where he resides with his wife and two dogs. Gregory graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology with double minors in Criminology and Social Justice from Coastal Carolina University and earned a Master of Arts degree in Communication with a concentration in Advocacy from Coastal Carolina University. His personal and professional activism and passion for helping others has prepared him for this role, and he is dedicated to helping ensure their needs are met.

Congratulations to Continuum of Care's Region C



Continuum of Care Director Greg Wright recently gave a shout-out to Continuum of Care's Region C for reaching goals related to new youth enrollment, coaching, and new leadership.

S.C. Continuum of Care (COC) serves children with serious emotional and behavioral health diagnoses. COC uses High Fidelity Wraparound (HFW) to provide evidence-based intensive care coordination to help youth remain in their homes, schools and communities.

Ten Principles of High-Fidelity Wraparound



Do you know a youth who is struggling with serious emotional or behavioral challenges and who needs help remaining in their home, school or community? S.C. Continuum of Care may be able to help. Learn more about eligibility and the application process [here](#).



**Heart
Gallery**
South Carolina

S.C. Heart Gallery Promotes Forever Homes for Waiting Children



Mia was born in 2010 and is interested in being adopted by a forever family. Mia is a future nurse whose favorite subject is science, because she likes to do experiments. She likes to play outside on sunny days and particularly enjoys going swimming. She describes herself as smart and fashionable. Mia is open to all kinds of families but would like there to be other kids or pets. To learn more about smart and fashionable Mia, click [here](#).



Mia's Photographer:
Kris Copeland ©2022



Seth prefers to be called Bryson and is a “man of many talents.” He’s good at math, and he enjoys playing video games and throwing a football. He’s also involved in the arts. He described his perfect day as rehearsing for a play and sleeping. Being multi-talented is tiring!

Bryson describes himself as funny, laid back, and caring. He would like families to know that he’s very likeable and entertaining, and he’d like a family with two parents, siblings, and a dog. Click [here](#) to to learn more about this likeable and entertaining young man.



Bryson's photographer:
2Feet Productions ©2022